



Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

Introduction

Objective:

Students will write a play review for The Children's Theatre production of *Tom Sawyer*.

Academic Content Standards:

- ❖ National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association Standards for English Language Arts: #4, #5 and #12.
 - *Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes*
 - *Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.*
 - *Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion and the exchange of information).*

- ❖ Ohio Academic Content Standards for Language Arts: #7 Writing Application Standard
 - *Students need to understand that various types of writing require different language, formatting and special vocabulary*
 - Benchmark D (4th Grade)
 - Benchmark D, E (5th & 6th Grades)

Getting Started

Materials:

- Handout A
- Handout B

Vocabulary:

- Critique
- Fact
- Opinion

Technology:

Internet access. Posting of student generated play reviews on class web page.

Web Links:

<http://www.wisc.edu/writetest/Handbook/PlayReview.html> (Play review web site)

<http://www.lkwdpl.org/gr4test/wrirubr.htm> (ODE writing proficiency rubric web resource)

Lesson

Orientation Activity:

Before attending the play, *Tom Sawyer*, teacher and students review the web site, *The University of Wisconsin Writing Center>Preparing to Write a Play Review*. This web site offers specific steps and examples in writing a play review. While attending the play, students will consider four aspects of the performance for critique: the setting and costumes, the acting ability, the special effects, and the plot. Provide students on the bus trip home, or as soon as they return from the play, with copies of *Handout A*, a graphic organizer for note taking, so that they can record ideas and thoughts while still

fresh in their minds. (<http://www.wisc.edu/writetest/Handbook/PlaWriting.html>)

Learning Activity:

After viewing the play, students, in small groups, share their ideas and thoughts about the four key items listed on *Handout A*. Students will also record additional notes from the discussion with fellow classmates and then add any other additional thoughts of their own.

During independent work time, students begin writing their review using the format from The University of Wisconsin's Writing Center as summarized on *Handout B*. Examples of sample reviews of other plays are posted on the web site for students to read if they so choose.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Assessment Tools and Methods:

Handout B checklist

Ohio Writing Proficiency Test Rubric

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Language Arts: Watch a video version of another book in a dramatic play format and have students critique the performance and compile written reports.

Handout A



Name _____

Directions:

In groups, share your opinions about *Tom Sawyer*. Take notes about each aspect of the performance in the graphic organizer below. Add your own thoughts before and after the group discussion.

Aspect of the Performance	Notes and Ideas
Scenery	
Costumes	
Acting ability	
Special Effects	
Plot	
Other	



Handout B

Name _____

Directions: Check off each point below when you have added it to your review.

Your review should include:

	Student	Teacher
Introduction		
Name of playwright, director, main characters	_____	_____
Date, venue, other similar or related productions	_____	_____
General impression	_____	_____
Thematic summary with example	_____	_____
Body		
Describe and give general impression of scenery	_____	_____
Describe and give general impression of costumes	_____	_____
Describe and give general impression of acting ability	_____	_____
Describe and give general impression of special effects	_____	_____
Describe and give general impression of plot	_____	_____
Analyze and evaluate each of the above points	_____	_____
Summary and Conclusion		
Restate your argument	_____	_____
Leave your reader with something to ponder...	_____	_____
English		
Spelling	_____	_____
Grammar and Punctuation	_____	_____
Sentence structure	_____	_____